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Copy 10 of 10

20 June 1963

NRO REVIEW COMPLETED

MEMORANDUM FOR : Chief, Programs Staff, OSA
Chief, Contracts Division, OSA

SUBJECT : Approval for Long-Lead Time Items in U-2 Carrier Conversion

1. Following Kelly Johnson's discussions with Mr. Edward M. Ryan, BUNAVWEPS, Kelly and I had a wind-up chat on the telephone to see where we stood. His preliminary conclusions are that he will have to fabricate a new main landing gear for the U-2 to replace the light-weight magnesium gear in use now. Since the dies for the original U-2 landing gear cannot be located, he says that he will have to start to work on fabricating a new gear from scratch which will mean ordering a limited number of hand forgings from subcontractors. These, of course, will be engineered against the heavier stresses imposed on the gear in the course of carrier operations. According to Kelly, carrier operations will dictate twice the rate of descent that the gear is engineered for.

2. In view of Kelly's commitment of 18 June to a twenty-week time envelope for the complete U-2 conversion to carrier/J-75 configuration, and because he needs to procure certain lead-time items now in order to be able to keep that schedule based on a 1 July input date for the first bird, we agreed that it would be feasible to go ahead and immediately expend up [] for critical items associated with landing gear. In addition, I asked him to proceed to develop a sling for the U-2 so that it might be hoisted aboard a carrier at dockside in the event that we find it necessary to use this system to launch aircraft against critical Middle Eastern targets in a short time. This amount we agreed should initially be up to [] NR 25X1

3. Above and beyond the immediate outlay [] referred to above, after conferring with the Chief, Programs Staff, OSA, it was agreed that we would proceed to obligate [] under the existing [] contract against the carrier conversion requirement. This, of course, would be from Fiscal NR 25X1

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Year 1963 funds in accordance with our current forecast for the balance of the Fiscal Year. It is likely that before the first of the month we may need more than [redacted] and I will now be in a position to authorize additional pacing item expenditures from the [redacted] bank roll. Should we later for any reason decide to abandon the carrier concept, the obligated funds could be applied to the over-all conversion job, which will be a firm requirement for Fiscal Year 1964 now that Air Force has turned over two additional U-2's to us. I, therefore, request that the Chief, Contracts Division, OSA, send a TWX to Lockheed conforming with the facts as stated above and advise the undersigned.

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[redacted]
JAMES A. CUNNINGHAM, Jr.
Deputy Assistant Director
(Special Activities)

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P. S. Subsequent to dictating the above, [redacted] 7081 (IN 80445) was received. I request that we advise Kelly to immediately go ahead on fabrication of two sets of tin parts as requested in Paragraph 2 of this message. This [redacted] item can be costed against the [redacted] obligation noted above.

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DAD/OSA:JA Cunningham, Jr. /mm

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In the returning trip from the West Coast in the C-118 aircraft with 20,000 pounds of cargo the fuel reserve is sufficient to back track as far as Patterson A. F. B. as an alternate, should the weather require. The normal flying time from coast to coast is approximately eight hours.

3. In operating any aircraft there is always the problem of maintenance and parts. The C-54 parts are becoming very scarce and often requires days to procure the necessary parts. The C-118 parts are much more readily available.

NOTE: With our established priority usually the work can be accomplished faster than the parts can be requisitioned.

4. Most of the cargo that is transported is classified "Top Secret" and very often can be recognized if tied in with a particular delivery point; therefore, it is mandatory that agency-cleared crews fly this cargo to their destination. Otherwise, the cargo must be delivered to a depot then transhipped. When this is done it is both time consuming and costly.

a. The average pay load per month runs approximately 38,000 pounds each way. This amounts to four trips per month in a C-54 or two to three trips per month in the C-118. This alone in the hourly cost of operation is quite a savings in money.

b. It should be remembered that cube is more of a problem than weight in most instances - the C-118 being 13 feet longer and with two large loading doors which makes it much easier for loading and transporting.

5. From a flying safety standpoint the minimum enroute altitude traversing East and West is 11,000 feet. As a comparison, the C-54 with 10,000 pounds of cargo, and 1,300 gallons of gasoline, with two engines inoperative, has a operating ceiling of 4,300 feet. The C-118 with 15,000 pounds of cargo and 2,000 gallons of gasoline, with two engines inoperative, has an operating ceiling of 8,300 feet.

Using minimum crews it should be pointed out that fatigue is often a problem. This can greatly be reduced

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